

James Madison to Joel Barlow, August 11, 1812. Copy-Partly in cipher. Transcription: The Writings of James Madison, ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900-1910.

TO JOEL BARLOW. MAD. MSS.

Washington August 11, 1812

Dear Sir, —As I write on short notice and in cypher, I must be very brief.

The conduct of the F. Govt, explained in yours of the —1 on the subject of the decree of April 1811, will be an everlasting reproach to it. It is the

1 May 12, which followed his of May 2. They are printed in part in *State Papers, Foreign Relations*, vol. iii., 602.

more shameful, as, departing from the declaration to Genl. Armstrong, of which the enforcement of the non-importation was the affect, the revoking decree assumes this as the cause, and itself as the effect; and thus transfers to this Govt the inconsistency of its author.

The decree of April, may nevertheless be used by G. B. as a pretext for revoking her orders; notwithstanding the contrary language of Ld Castlereagh in Parlt. An authentic, tho' informal communication has just arrived in a despatch vessel from G. B. importing that the orders were to be revoked on the 1st of Augst, subject to renewal if required by the conduct of F. & the U. S. particularly, if the nonimportation act should not be forthwith rescinded on the arrival of the act of revocation. As this pledge was given before the

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declaration of war was known, it may not be adhered to. It is not improbable however that it was hurried off, as a chance for preventing an apprehended war; and that the same dislike to the war may possibly produce advances for terminating it, which if the terms be admissible, will be readily embraced.

In the event of a pacification with G. B. the full tide of indignation with which the public mind here is boiling will be directed agst. France, if not obviated by a due reparation of her wrongs. War will be called for by the Nation almost una voce. Even without a peace with England, the further refusal or prevarications of F. on the subject of redress may be expected to produce measures of hostility agst. her at the ensuing session of Congs. This result is the more probable, as the general exasperation will coincide with the calculations of not a few, that a double war, is the shortest road to peace.

I have been the more disposed to furnish you with these prospects, that you may turn them to account, if possible, in prosecuting your discussions with the F. Govt. and be not unprepared to retire from them altogether, on a sudden notice so to do. Your return home, may possibly be directed even before the meeting of Congs. if the intermediate information should continue to present the French conduct in the provoking light in which it has hitherto appeared.

The Secy. of State is absent. But you will receive from Mr. Graham, the usual supply of current intelligence, to which I refer you. I have not time to write to Genl. Fayette. With my best regards to him, tell him that Congs. rose witht deciding as to the validity of the remaining locations near Pt Coupee.